TL1504-4

Mission permanente du Portugal
Genève

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

45TH SESSION

- ITEM 9 -

Right of Reply

Ambassador Costa Lobo,
on behalf of the Portuguese delegation

Geneva, 7th February 1989

1ST RIGHT OF REPLY

In a constructive spirit, and in order to contribute to have the record even more straight, I would like to make the following remarks concerning the situation of East Timor, which has been mentioned this morning by the delegation of Indonesia.

1. Concerning the allegation that the people of East Timor has already exercised its right to self-determination, I would like to recall that, shortly after the alleged act of self-determination took place, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution (31/53, of 1/XII/76) where it states: "Rejects the claim that East Timor has been integrated into Indonesia, inasmuch as the people of the Territory have not been able to exercise freely their right to self-determination and independence".

And the following year, in resolution 32/34 of 28/XI/77, the General Assembly adopted a similar position.

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2. The distinguished Representative of Indonesia mentioned in his statement that this so called exercise of the right to self-determination was "witnessed at every stage by scores of foreign diplomats and international media representatives". May I point out to the Commission that not only the UN organs refused to attend this act, but many countries invited did as well, since Indonesia had not withdrawn its troops from the territory.

In one of the few seven countries who accepted, New Zeeland, it has been recently published a report made, at the time, by the diplomat who represented that country. As the newspaper "The Dominion Sunday Times", of Wellington, states, in its edition of January 5th, 1989, in that report, apparently now made public by the "Ministry of external relations and trade" of New Zeeland, the author questions the validity of the representation of the East Timorese by the 37 member assembly who "decided" integration with Indonesia, recalling that the voting took only 20 minutes, and that invited observers were actually not permitted to watch it, since that act took place within a closed room.

Moreover he states that he, himself, was only allowed to stay in East Timor for no more than two hours, not having a chance to talk to the "delegates" to such an assembly.

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He also admits that the first doubts about the regularity of that process came into his mind when he received from Indonesian authorities leaflets rejoicing with the decision on integration, even before the assembly had met.

3. Finally, I would like to welcome the declaration by the distinguished Representative of Indonesia stating that his country is committed to the on-going dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary General of the United Nations.

2ND RIGHT OF REPLY

Je me limiterais, dans mon droit de réponse, à poser la question suivante:

Si la question du Timor orientale n'est plus une question coloniale, pourquoi continue-elle a être inscrite a l'ordre du jour du Comité des Nations Unies pour la Décolonisation, le "Comité des 24"?